

MLK widow is on mend post-stroke

Special to Sentinel-Voice

ATLANTA—Coretta Scott King has been able to put weight on her right leg and is able to communicate with her four children — telling them “I love you,” her doctor said.

King’s personal physician, Maggie Mermin, said the wife of the late Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., is making significant improvements from a stroke she suffered two weeks ago, but she will still spend at least a month at Piedmont Hospital going through rehabilitation.

“I am expecting more improvement. She doesn’t have to be back to normal in order for us to release her. We send people home for home physical therapy all the time,” Mermin said Friday at a noon press conference at the hospital. “But because she needs such intense therapy, we thought we would just keep her here and do it here.”

Mermin said King has been transferred to a rehabilitation bed, and she is taking three hours a day of physical, speech and occupational therapy.

King suffered a major stroke and mild heart attack on Aug. 16. The stroke left her unable to speak and severely weak on her right side. But since the stroke, Mermin said King has made progress, including being able to sing and speak a few words.

“She has said two or three short sentences,” Mermin said. “When she sees her children, she says ‘I love you.’ At first, she was only repeating things that the speech therapist said to her, or [the speech therapist] would start a song and [King] would start to sing it. Now she is coming up with what she wants to say, which is new. Every day, there is a little progress.”

King’s right arm is still very weak, but Mermin said she has been able to transfer weight to her right leg when she is being moved.

“She is learning to use her left hand and relearning to use her right hand,” Mermin said. “Her personality is the same. Her intellect is the same and her smile is the same. The right side of her face is moving a little more, so she is looking like herself.”

Mermin said that King has been a model patient, although she refused to use a feeding tube, which was recommended by the speech therapist.

“She was really clear about that, she did not want it,” Mermin said. “We said okay, but you have to get enough calories.” King is strong enough to feed herself with her left hand, said Mermin.

Hilda Tompkins, a friend of the King family, said all of King’s children have been touched by the many “expressions of concern and care during Mrs. King’s illness.”

Tompkins said two funds have been set up for people eager to make donations to King:

- The Coretta Scott King Scholarship Fund at Antioch College, 795 Livermore St., Yellow Springs, Ohio, 45387
- The Coretta Scott King Health & Wellness Fund, Citizens Trust Bank, P.O. Box 4809, Atlanta, Ga. 30302

Watts won't seek Oklahoma governorship

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) - Former Congressman J.C. Watts said Tuesday he will not run for governor in Oklahoma next year.

“I have determined that the timing for such an adventure is not right at this point in our lives,” he said in a statement.

He said he spent more than two months talking to voters across the state before reaching his decision.

Watts is the second Republican to decide against making the race; Lt. Gov.

Mary Fallin has announced she will run for re-election instead of running for governor. Their moves leave the GOP without a proven vote-getter with wide name recognition to challenge Gov. Brad Henry, the popular Democratic incumbent.

Watts, 47, recently bought a home in the Washington, D.C., area, where he started a lobbying and consulting business after leaving Congress.

“I cannot in good conscience conclude that 2006 is

right for me and for the family that I love so much,” Watts said.

Republican state Sen. Jim Williamson of Tulsa and oil executive Robert Sullivan have said they will run for governor.

Watts said that in talking to voters he found a desire for change in leadership in the state, which often compares poorly to other states in such areas as economic development.

“I grieve when I hear outsiders talk of Oklahoma as a

Third World state with no opportunity to grow,” he said. “I grieve when I hear of the mass exodus of educators crossing our borders for greater opportunity in Texas, Kansas, Colorado and over 40 other states.”

Watts, a former star football player at the University of Oklahoma, was elected to the U.S. House in 1994. He was the fourth-ranking Republican and the only Black Republican in the House before announcing in 2002 he would not see re-election.

School

(Continued from Page 2) provided but said she wouldn’t at this point. “Maybe later, after I see how it goes,” but she has reservations because what she feels are pickup and drop off stops that are near crime areas, she said.

“I don’t want to worry about how my kids are going to get home,” Drumgoole said. “I’d rather pick them up,” she said. Vyktoria seems to enjoy her personal limo.

The district and Beverly Mathis, principal of Booker, said they appreciated having access to three busses, which are expected to transport a large portion of the schools 400 students for the year-long displacement. Mathis and campus security, headed by Mark Campbell, and security monitors have a commitment of working together to ensure students’ safety.

Future Booker Elementary - A Model School Campus

When Drumgoole’s daughters return to the Booker campus in 2007, along with her youngest, age 3, the girls will be attend a custom design facility.

It will be unique among the 314 school facilities in the Clark County School Dis-



Sentinel-Voice photo by Parker Philpot

Vyktoria Myles, 5, told her mother, Eryka Drumgoole, that she learned “a little” on her first day of kindergarten.

trict. Winston Henderson, lead architect for Las Vegas-based PGA/WHA LIMITED, completed design of the 62,200-square-foot replacement school earlier this year. On the Booker Elementary School design project, Henderson partnered with Jess F. Perez and Melvin D. Green. Construction on the \$17 million, 62,200-square-foot replacement school will start this fall. Replacing aging schools is a key part of the 10-year, \$3.5 billion capital improvement program passed by voters in November 1998.

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